Socialism and the State

A. Kositsyn

Discussing
Advanced Socialism

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What is the state? How did it emerge? What future awaits it in the present epoch? These questions are answered by Professor Alexander Kositsyn, a noted Soviet scholar and popular writer on problems relating to the state and law. The author describes in plain language the complex processes involved in the rise and development of the socialist state, allotting considerable space to an analysis of the state of developed socialism and a characterization of socialist democracy, the basic features of which found their reflection in the new Constitution of the USSR adopted in 1977.

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CHAPTER I.

CLASS-DIVIDED SOCIETY AND THE STATE

Over the centuries philosophers, lawyers and historians sought answers to the questions of how and when the state arose, wherein lies the source of its power, what are its essence and social purpose.

Some of them said the state had emerged because society so willed; others saw in it an embodiment of the "absolute spirit"; still others regarded the state as a kind of living organism functioning in accordance with biological laws.

The real cause of the rise of the state and the active role state power plays in the life of society were explained for the first time by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Elaborating a genuinely scientific theory of society's historical development, they uncovered the hidden springs of the mechanism of political power and defined the laws governing the development of the state from its emergence to the withering away of statehood in the future classless communist society.

The Division of Society into Classes and the Rise of the State

The question of the emergence of the state among different peoples is examined in detail in Engels' "The Origin of the Family, Private

Property and the State" (1884), where it is shown that the state is a product of society's internal development, that "it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it has split into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power seemingly standing above society that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of 'order'; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state." [1]

A few words by way of explanation.

The fact is that at the earlier stages of the development of society the state did not exist. People lived in clans and communes. Whatever a clan or commune could obtain was immediately consumed. There was hardly any surplus food to be stored. Often primitive men went half-hungry. In such conditions none of the members of the clan could appropriate anything. Everything belonged to the clan or commune as a whole. It was a pre-class society, which existed for many millennia.

However, the productive forces of the primitive society (men with their work habits and im-

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[1] K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, Vol. 3, pp. 326-27.

plements of labour) developed, even if slowly. As time went by, people improved their implements of labour and gained working skills. They progressed from crude stone tools to the bow and the arrow, and learned how to smelt bronze and iron and make metal objects. The productive forces of society rose to a higher level. As a result, the primitive commune began to obtain more products than it could immediately consume. That was how there appeared the surplus product, i.e. a product which was not necessary at the given time, without which the clan or tribe could do. This surplus product could be exchanged for some other product with a neighbouring clan or tribe, or appropriated by any member of the clan.

As a rule, clans and tribes were headed by the more experienced leaders, chiefs or elders, who were in a particularly favourable position to use the surplus product in their personal interest. The appropriation of the surplus product by individual persons gave rise to private ownership, and the economic equality that existed in the primitive commune began to disappear. Some people were becoming richer and other poorer. This differentiation led to the formation of large groups of people–classes–which differed from each other in that some of them were in possession of the means of production (the land, livestock, implements of labour) and others were not.

The first society in mankind's history in which people were divided into social classes with antagonistic (irreconcilable) interests was the slave-owning society. It was based on ruthless exploi-

tation of huge numbers of slaves. But the slaves fought against their exploiters, the slave-owners. Driven to desperation by the inhuman conditions of their life, they would rise in rebellion against the slave-owning system, undermining its foundations.

In order to keep the exploited majority in subjection, to dictate their will to them and suppress their resistance, the ruling classes established special organs of power—the army, the courts, the police, prisons—all of which constitute the state, the tool used by the propertied classes for suppressing the exploited masses.

Prior to the division of society into classes its affairs were run by all its members; power was not separated from the people. The authority of the elders and chiefs rested on their personal qualities such as great experience, wisdom, courage, etc. With the emergence of private ownership the propertied class seized political dominance in society in order to protect its privileges, with the result that power became separated from the people and turned into a machine for suppressing the resistance of the oppressed masses.

As centuries went by the classes of exploiters and the forms of exploitation changed, but the state retained its exploitative essence, remaining the machine for suppressing the toiling masses. "...the state of antiquity," Engels wrote at the end of the 19th century, "was above all the state of the slave-owners for the purpose of holding down the slaves, as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down the peasant serfs and bondsmen, and the modern representative

state is an instrument of exploitation of wage labour by capital." [1]

There are three exploiter classes known to history: slave-owners, feudal lords, and the bourgeoisie. Accordingly, three *types* of exploitative state—slave-owning, feudal, and bourgeois. It may be concluded, therefore, that the type of state is determined by the class which it serves.

While the type of a state expresses its class essence, the *form* reflects its structure, the organization of the bodies of power and administration, and the political regime.

The form of government depends on how supreme power is exercised. There are two principal forms of government—the monarchy and the republic. The monarchy is the hereditary power of one man (tsar, king, emperor), who relies on the dominant class to which he belongs and whose will he carries out. In a republic power is exercised by elective organs. Most of the modern states are republics. But there also are states that contain features to be found in both a monarchy and a republic. For example, Great Britain, Japan and Morocco are constitutional monarchies; in them the power of the monarch is circumscribed by law and an important role is played by elective organs of power.

Three forms of state structure are known: the unitarian state with one parliament, one government and a uniform system of law; the federation—a union of two or more states having equal

[1] K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 328.

rights in a new, single state (the FRG, Nigeria, Mexico); and the confederation, which is a temporary union of states for the solution of military, economic or diplomatic tasks.

Different methods of exercising class domination can exist under one and the same form of government and state structure. The sum total of these methods determines the nature of the political regime. The dominant exploiter class can rule by openly terroristic or by democratic methods, but more often it employs a stick and carrot policy.

While considering that the type of a state plays the main, determining role, Marxism-Leninism attaches great importance to its form, holding that a more democratic form provides even under the rule of exploiter classes more favourable possibilities for social progress, for the struggle of the working people against oppression and exploitation.

However, no form, however democratic, can change the nature of a state based on private ownership of the means of production. As long as this basis remains, even the most democratic republic inevitably remains a dictatorship of the exploiter class, a machine for suppressing the toiling majority.

* * *

We have an entirely new historical type of state in the *socialist state*, in which power is exercised by the working people headed by the working class. Its economic basis is public ownership of

the means of production. This means that the land, its mineral resources, factories, machine tools and other means of production are not privately owned but belong to the whole people and therefore cannot serve as an instrument of exploitation of the majority by the minority.

CHAPTER II.

THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION AND THE STATE

For centuries working people dreamed of a society of justice in which power would belong to them, express their will, and defend their interests. They had different conceptions of this society of freedom, plenty and happiness, and of the ways which were to lead to the emancipation of the oppressed and destitute.

In his "Utopia" Thomas More, the 16th-century English philosopher, drew a picture of an ideal state based on public ownership where all work in conditions of equality and democratic government. In the imaginary "City of the Sun" of the Italian philosopher Tommaso Campanella power belonged to sages and priests who ruled according to the dictates of reason and the laws of nature.

When considering ways of building a new society, some placed their hopes on the mercy of wise and enlightened monarchs; others, on heroes capable of leading the oppressed people. There also were those who relied on the axe, the bomb, on acts of terror against those in power to bring liberation. They conspired and planned assassinations, believing that this was the way to win happiness for the people.

With the emergence of Marxism in the 19th century mankind's age-old dream of a better life ceased to be utopian. Basing themselves on a critical analysis of the history of the liberation movement of the peoples, Marx and Engels showed

that the way to building a society of social justice lay only through revolution, in the course of which the working people led by the working class overthrow the political rule of the exploiters and establish their revolutionary power.

The Birth of the Socialist State

History shows that no exploiter class has ever relinquished its power of its own free will. On the contrary, it has invariably striven to preserve its domination by all possible means, the most extreme forms of violence included.

Therefore, the question of state power is the central, fundamental question of any revolution, and especially the socialist revolution aimed at destroying the exploitative system and establishing socialism. After taking power in its own hands the working class abolishes private ownership of the means of production and effects deep-going progressive socio-economic, political and cultural transformations. Aware that their dominance is at stake, the exploiter classes fiercely resist any action in the direction of social progress, employing all the instruments of suppression at their disposal–the army, the police and the powerful ideological media.

The first and main task of a socialist revolution is to take political power away from the reactionary bourgeoisie and turn it over to the working people. The working class, the communist party are interested, naturally, in a peaceful development of the revolution, in a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism. More than a

hundred years ago, replying to the question, "Will it be possible to bring about the abolition of private property by peaceful methods?", Engels said: "It is to be desired that this could happen, and Communists certainly would be the last to resist it." [1] The peaceful road saves tremendous material values and great number of people from destruction, and therefore, as Lenin wrote, it is "the least painful", "the easiest and the most advantageous for the people" [2].

Another question arising before the revolutionary masses is that of the attitude towards the bourgeois machinery of state.

All previous revolutions limited themselves to replacing the power of some oppressors by that of others, as a result of which the essence of the state did not change and its apparatus remained intact. For instance, after seizing power the bourgeoisie did not break up the old state machine but adapted it to the solution of its economic and political tasks. This continuity of power rests on a community of the aims of old and new but equally exploiting classes—on the preservation of private ownership and the oppression of man by man.

The socialist revolution radically changes the economic foundations of society, abolishing private ownership of the means of production. For the first time in history, the political domination of every kind of exploiters is toppled and power goes into the hands of the working class allied with the masses of urban and rural working peo-

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[1] K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 89.
[2] V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 25, p. 187.

ple. For this reason the socialist revolution cannot use the old, bourgeois state machine, geared as it is to oppressing and suppressing the working people. It must demolish this machine and build in its stead a new state apparatus conforming to the requirements of the society building socialism. This does not rule out the possibility of preserving some of the old state institutions, which acquire a qualitatively new content under socialism.

The Socialist Revolution in Russia

When the first break in the imperialist chain was made by the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 in Russia, the correlation of world forces was not in favour of the working class, and a peaceful development of the revolution was unlikely. The sharp division and confrontation of class forces forced the revolutionary masses on a path of revolutionary insurrection.

Noting that the necessity of an armed uprising was imposed upon the working people by the reactionary bourgeoisie and was therefore a forced necessity, Lenin tirelessly stressed the seriousness of this form of struggle. If the course of events, he said, places an armed uprising on the agenda, it should be treated as a special form of political struggle having its own laws which it is necessary to study carefully and to make the basis of all revolutionary activity. Lenin often recalled Marx's words to the effect that insurrection is an art, warning against any adventurist action, against conspiratorial playing at seizure of power. He singled out the following main rules for an armed uprising:

"(1) *Never play* with insurrection, but when beginning it realize firmly that you must *go all the way.*

"(2) Concentrate a *great superiority of forces* at the decisive point and at the decisive moment, otherwise the enemy, who has the advantage of better preparation and organization, will destroy the insurgents.

"(3) Once the insurrection has begun, you must act with the greatest *determination,* and by all means, without fail, take the *offensive.* 'The defensive is the death of every armed rising.'

"(4) You must try to take the enemy by surprise and seize the moment when his forces are scattered.

"(5) You must strive for *daily* successes, however small (one might say hourly, if it is the case of one town), and at all costs retain *'moral superiority'.*" [1]

Proceeding from an objective analysis of the correlation of forces in Russia and the peculiarities of the situation, the Bolsheviks [2] headed by Lenin succeeded in mobilizing the revolutionary masses in October 1917. They worked out a detailed plan for the uprising, mapping out in it the direction for all the combat forces of the revolution. At different stages of the revolution Lenin's

[1] V. Lenin, *Coll. Works,* Vol. 26, pp. 179-180.

[2] Bolshevism was the revolutionary Marxist trend in the international working-class movement. The term was coined after the election of the leading organs of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party at its 2nd Congress (1903), where Lenin's supporters received the majority (*bolshinstvo* in Russian) and the opportunists found themselves in a minority—*menshinstvo* (hence Mensheviks).

party employed flexible tactics, combining peaceful and non-peaceful, legal and illegal forms of struggle.

As a matter of fact, the October Revolution itself was practically bloodless: five sailors and one soldier were killed and several people wounded during the assault on the seat of Russia's Provisional Government, the Winter Palace in Petrograd (now Leningrad). The seas of blood that were spilled afterwards cannot be blamed on the workers and peasants, whom the forces of world counter-revolution compelled to abandon their lathes and ploughs and take up arms. Refusing to put up with the victory of the working people in October 1917, the Russian capitalists and landowners unleashed a civil war. They were aided by troops of 14 foreign states, which tried by force of arms to restore capitalism in Russia.

The Peaceful Road of Revolution

In 1917, when a bitter class struggle was raging in Russia, Lenin spoke of the peaceful road as of an extremely rare possibility. However, it was not ruled out in principle even then. In Lenin's opinion, it was the duty of the working class to try to take advantage of any such possibility, "if there is even one chance in a hundred". [1]

That was exactly how Lenin acted in practice. On two occasions, in April-July and in late August and early September, 1917, he proposed

[1] V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 25, p. 307.

exploiting the possibility of peaceful development of the socialist revolution that had presented itself. In the first instance, it was only in response to open armed violence on the part of the bourgeoisie, which organized the shooting of a workers' and peasants' demonstration in Petrograd in July, that the slogan of peaceful revolution was replaced with the slogan of armed insurrection. All responsibility for the failure to use the second chance rested with the leaders of the petty-bourgeois parties, who opted for agreement with the big bourgeoisie and thereby jeopardized the victory of the revolution. It was not the Communists' fault that the peaceful road of revolution did not materialize. Had it depended on them, there could have been no bloodshed.

In the present epoch, there exist great possibilities for the peaceful development of revolution. This does not mean that the exploitative nature of the bourgeoisie has changed and that it will relinquish its power voluntarily. The bourgeoisie cedes power peacefully when convinced of its weakness and of the hopelessness of armed resistance. This happens when for some or other reason it finds itself deprived of military assistance from international imperialism and of any appreciable support from the masses.

The example of peaceful development of the socialist revolution was furnished by the peoples of Central and South-Eastern Europe in the 1940s.

It will be recalled that during the Second World War of 1939-45 these peoples were enslaved by German fascism and subjected to barbarous economic plunder, which turned their countries into economic vassals, into direct agrarian-raw mate-

rial and agrarian-industrial appendages to imperialist monopolies.

The workers and artisans in these countries became downtrodden, ruthlessly exploited colonial slaves. The fascist "new order" deprived the working class of all its previous gains. The organizations and parties of the working people were disbanded and banned. It became impossible for the exploited people to fight for their interests by legal means.

On the other hand, the invaders pursued a policy of modifying property rights in favour of their monopolies. It led to the destruction of a number of branches of national production, injuring the interests of the local bourgeoisie.

The occupants' policy of implanting their own capitalists and landowners in the enslaved countries tended to awaken the class consciousness of the peasants, stir into action all strata of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie and induce it to break with the treacherous ruling bourgeois-landowner clique and join the anti-fascist, anti-imperialist camp. That camp included also the progressive part of the intelligentsia, which protested against the destruction of national culture by fascism. All patriotic forces embarked on an anti-fascist, national liberation struggle.

Having worked out their strategy and tactics by taking into account the objective situation, and in accordance with Marxist-Leninist theory, the communist parties placed themselves at the head of the national liberation struggle of the patriotic forces of their countries. The proletariat rallied all democratic classes, groups and parties opposed to the fascist regime.

The liberation of the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe by the Soviet Army dealt a shattering blow to internal reactionary forces, creating exceptionally favourable conditions for the victory of the popular forces. And they did win: their revolutionary struggle led to the establishment of state power of a new type–a people's democracy.

In their class essence the new, democratic states were organs of the dictatorship of several classes–the proletariat, the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie, and in a number of countries also a part of the middle bourgeoisie. Strong positions were occupied by the working class. This extended the revolutionary possibilities of the masses of working people: now the proletariat could act not only "from below", but also "from the top", taking advantage of its participation in revolutionary government.

Striving to bring about the victory of the socialist revolution, the Marxist-Leninist parties in the countries of people's democracy relied, not on parliamentary coalitions and government combinations, but on promotion of the revolutionary initiative of the working people. They urged them on with revolutionary slogans, called on them to fight for the interests of the people, organized meetings, strikes and demonstrations. In this way the proletariat was carrying out the revolution from below.

Moreover, taking advantage of its participation in parliament and government to advance the revolution, the working class used state power to support the revolutionary struggle of the masses and suppress the counter-revolutionary forces.

The proletariat accomplishing a socialist revolution was no longer faced with the task of toppling the existing state power and breaking up its apparatus of coercion. The development of the democratic revolution into a socialist revolution took place within a framework of people's democracy, when the vital organs of the state such as the security agencies, the police and the army were already organs of the people, being influenced or directly controlled by the working class. This made recourse to armed violence against the people exceedingly difficult for the big bourgeoisie.

The peaceful development of the revolution was also helped along by the powerful influence exerted on the revolutionary process by the socialist Soviet Union. The presence in the countries in question of Soviet troops, which had liberated them from the Nazi invaders, the Soviet Union's treaties of mutual assistance with Czechoslovakia and Poland held in check the forces of internal and external reaction, preventing them from launching a civil war and intervention.

In Chile, too, political power passed into the hands of the working people in a peaceful way. Roused by the revolution to struggle against exploitation and the dominance of foreign monopolies, the broad masses of Chilean working people embarked upon building a new life. The revolution was headed by persons of sterling integrity and profound humanity. But the Chilean revolution was caught unawares by a conspiracy of reactionaries engineered and financed by foreign imperialism. Fascist-minded military putschists overthrew the lawful government of the working

people and established a terroristic dictatorship which drenched the country in the blood of tens of thousands of sons and daughters of the working people.

The temporary defeat of the Chilean revolution does not detract from its historical merits, from the importance of its experience. "The Chilean tragedy has by no means invalidated the communist thesis about the possibility of different ways of revolution, including the peaceful way, if the necessary conditions exist," L. I. Brezhnev said in the CPSU Central Committee's report to the 25th Party Congress. "But it has been a forceful reminder that a revolution must know how to defend itself. It is a lesson in vigilance against present-day fascism and the intrigues of foreign reaction, and a call for greater international solidarity with all those who take the road of freedom and progress."

A strategic concept of peaceful and gradual transition to socialism has been enunciated by some communist parties of capitalist countries. It is oriented on a programme of radical democratic reforms envisaging nationalization of key branches of the economy and banks, democratic control and programming of the economy, workers' participation in management, a reform in the system of taxation, and democratization of different areas of social life.

These reforms do not in themselves add up to socialism, but they undermine the omnipotence of monopoly capital and in so doing pave the way for socialism, becoming intermediate stages on this way, part of the struggle for socialism.

Democratic reforms serve as a platform for a

broad democratic coalition of left forces headed by the working class. In the struggle for these reforms, for the extension of democracy mass-based socio-political forces of the socialist revolution are formed, the political authority of the working class is built up, and there opens up before it a possibility of winning, even before all power passes into its hands, important positions in the mechanism of the bourgeois state, in its executive and, what is more important still, representative bodies. This broadens the front of the class struggle and makes it possible to combat monopoly power by combining mass struggle from below with actions from the top, by those organs of power which the revolutionary forces are able to influence.

One of the ways of peaceful development of the revolution is to work through parliament. Relying on a majority of the people, the working class of a capitalist country can win a parliamentary majority and turn it into an instrument with the help of which the working people can overcome the resistance of the exploiter classes and ensure society's transition from capitalism to socialism.

To be sure, Marxist-Leninists never forget that the reactionary forces can resort to any means in the struggle against the working people. "We want this struggle to proceed in democratic forms," Italian Communist Party leader Luigi Longo pointed out in this connection. "But we have always said, and say now, that if the enemy dares to take recourse to violence, in the mistaken belief that it will manage to suppress the movement for a democratic and socialist renovation

of Italian society, we will be ready to put up a determined fight and destroy it."

The possibilities for socialist revolution have increased considerably following the elimination of imperialism's colonial system and the formation of independent young states in Africa and Asia. In his time, Lenin, who developed the concept of a single stream of proletarian and anti-colonial revolutions paving the way for a socialist reshaping of society, wrote: "... The socialist revolution will not be solely, or chiefly, a struggle of the revolutionary proletarians in each country against their bourgeoisie–no, it will be a struggle of all the imperialist-oppressed colonies and countries, of all dependent countries, against international imperialism." [1]

But what social forces in the developing countries will be able to lead the way in non-capitalist development? In most of these countries class differentiation is incomplete; the working class is only beginning to take shape and often does not constitute an organized political force. The national bourgeoisie as an independent class is also non-existent, as a rule.

An independent political role is here played by the middle strata–revolutionary officers, students, the democratic intelligentsia, the urban petty bourgeoisie, and the peasantry. They become the main social support of the forces championing socialism, and produce from their midst national liberation leaders who head the broad national-democratic bloc on whose behalf state power is exercised. In its character this

[1] V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 30, p. 159

power is a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the working people. Relying on the support of the international camp of socialism, it can initiate successfully progressive socio-economic and political reforms which will serve as the basis of a gradual transition to a socialist orientation and then to the building of socialism.

The world socialist system, the principal gain of the international working class, is a reliable shield protecting the developing countries against the imperialist export of counter-revolution and imperialism's economic and political pressure.

The socialist countries' economic assistance to the young developing states enables the latter to extricate themselves from the capitalist world economic system, nationalize large-scale private property and overcome the lop-sidedness of their economy, resulting from centuries of colonial rule. They help the newly-liberated peoples in training national personnel and promoting education and cultural progress, and pass on to them their experience in effectuating social transformations.

Marxist-Leninist ideology, too, exerts influence on the revolutionary democrats, who learn from their own experience that mastery of the theory of scientific socialism can help them avoid making mistakes on the path they choose. In fact, many of them declare that scientific socialism is the only correct theory of building a just society.

Forms of the Socialist State

Bourgeois propagandists contend that the Communists are out to establish everywhere the same

standard forms of political power. That is an absurd invention. Socialist statehood cannot be imposed upon society by anyone. It takes shape as a result of the liberation struggle of the working people of a country and bears the imprint of that country's concrete historical peculiarities. Therefore, while its socialist essence remains the same everywhere, the political forms of the new statehood differ from country to country.

The Paris Commune, which came into being as a result of an armed insurrection of the Paris workers on March 18, 1871, and which existed for 72 days, was the working people's first experience in forming a state.

The Paris Commune dismantled the old state machine and replaced the bureaucratic officialdom with elected officials who were accountable to the people and could be removed by them at any time. It abolished the old army and police, the ruling classes' chief instruments of political power, replacing them with a National Guard.

The world's first victorious socialist state found political embodiment in the Russian Republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

The Soviets (councils) of workers' deputies had come into being in Russia back in the course of the first Russian revolution of 1905-07 as organs of leadership of the workers' strike movement. In some cities they assumed revolutionary power, introducing an eight-hour working day, controlling operation of the public utilities and community services during strikes, and arresting those who resisted their revolutionary measures.

In October 1917 the Soviets took state power

into their hands in Russia. The first Soviet Constitution, adopted in 1918, vested all state power in the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. Through the Soviets the workers and peasants–the immediate producers of material goods–became builders of a new system. From the very outset the new state dismissed the old absurd but deep-rooted notion that only the upper classes and officials from wealthy families could govern, and proclaimed, in a famous slogan, that the masses must know everything, judge everything and do everything consciously.

The drawing by the Soviets of the entire working population into the work of state administration was, as Lenin put it, the "magic way" [1] in which the proletarian state enlarged its forces tenfold immediately, at one stroke, a way which no capitalist state possessed or could possess.

On the local level state power was exercised by city and rural Soviets and their elected executive committees, and at the centre, by the All-Russia Congress of Soviets and the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, the supreme legislative and supervisory organ of the republic which was elected by the All-Russia Congress and accountable to it.

A characteristic feature of the socialist state–the fusion of legislative and executive power in a single representative institution–found its most direct expression in the Soviets. All deputies to the Soviets and delegates to the congresses of Soviets actively participated in implementing the laws and decisions they themselves had adopted.

[1] V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 26, p. 111.

The deputies enjoyed no special privileges and performed their duties without pay.

Another feature of the Soviets as the organization of political power of a new type is that any deputy may be recalled at any time upon a decision taken by the constituents. Lenin attached special importance to this principle, regarding the electorate's right to recall deputies as an indicator of genuine democracy.

The concrete conditions in which socialism was built in Russia determined the specific characteristics of the Soviet state. The working class was confronted with the exploiters' fierce resistance and had to resort to tough measures in dealing with them. "We had to exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat in its harshest form," [1] Lenin said.

The peculiarities of the development of the October Revolution explain also the certain restrictions of democracy which the Soviet state was compelled to introduce–for instance, the disfranchisement of the exploiters (capitalists, kulaks [2]) and the most reactionary representatives of the old regime (for instance, former gendarmes and agents of the police).

However, what proved unavoidable in Russia, where the exploiter classes did not abandon hope of restoring their power until the last moment, is not a universal law of development for a socialist state. Lenin pointed out on many occasions that in those countries where the bourgeoisie do not put up strong resistance it would be easier for the socialist state to accomplish its tasks and

[1] V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 28, p. 207.

[2] The rural bourgeoisie who exploited the village poor.

it would be able to operate "...without the violence, without the bloodshed that was forced upon us by the Kerenskys and the imperialists". [1]

The historical experience of the European socialist countries has confirmed this, showing in practice that the dictatorship of the proletariat can be exercised in less harsh forms.

There the working class succeeded in avoiding civil war and did not have to resort to extraordinary methods to suppress the exploiters.

The new statehood in the USSR, the first socialist country, took the form of a one party system.

Bourgeois historians ascribe to Communists a deliberate and "theoretically substantiated" intention to crush all other parties, including democratic ones, and establish a one party system. These allegations have nothing in common either with the Marxist theory or with the actual course of historical events. The fact that a one party system is not an inherent part of socialist democracy is proved by the existence of a multi-party system in a number of socialist states.

For that matter, in Russia itself the Communists never took administrative action to abolish the system of political parties that had existed in the country prior to October 1917.

In October, 1917, the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets proclaimed the power of workers and peasants. The Communists received a majority of seats (62) in the supreme organ of state power—the All-Russia Central Executive Commit-

[1] V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 29, p. 271.

tee. Besides, it included 29 Left Socialist-Revolutionaries (SRs) [1] and ten representatives of other parties. Although the Communists were entitled to form a one party cabinet, they invited the Left SRs to participate in the government. The Central Committee of the Party issued an appeal stating that "We agreed, and *still agree,* to share power with the minority in the Soviets, provided that minority loyally and honestly undertake to submit to the majority and carry out the programme, *approved by the whole* Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, for gradual, but firm and undeviating steps towards socialism." [2]

The Left SRs accepted the offer. The government of the young republic–the Council of People's Commissars–included eleven Bolsheviks and seven representatives of that party. But the very first difficulties in the international arena made the Left SRs reveal their not only anti-socialist, but also undemocratic nature. They came out against ratifying the peace treaty with Germany, a treaty which was to give the country respite, to help safeguard the gains of the October Revolution and to consolidate Soviet power.

In March, 1918, acting on their own initiative, the SRs walked out of the coalition government, breaking the political bloc, and in June of the same year started an armed uprising against Soviet rule.

When the Civil War broke out in the country, all the leaders of the petty-bourgeois parties joined the camp of counter-revolution. It was

[1] A petty-bourgeois political party in Russia.
[2] V. Lenin, *Coll. Works,* Vol. 26, p. 307.

only natural for the masses, the peasantry included, to turn away from them.

The Communist Party remained the only party that consistently upheld the interests of the working class and all toiling people. With every new advance of the revolution it increasingly won the sympathies of the people, who came to see that they had a worthy leader who could not only fight the counter-revolution valiantly, but also steer the country along the right course.

The emergence, in the latter half of the 1940s, of the countries of people's democracy of central and South-Eastern Europe confirmed the Marxist-Leninists' idea of diverse political forms of socialist statehood. While it is the same in essence and has main features in common with the Soviet republic, people's democracy differed from it in some respects.

Socialist statehood came to be based in the countries of people's democracy on popular fronts. Built during the struggle of the working people for power, they included the working class, the peasantry and a considerable section of the petty and middle bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia.

As a rule, people's democracy did not impose restrictions on the right to vote, on the grounds of class affiliation. This was justified in countries where socialist revolutions sprang from democratic movements in which a part of the bourgeoisie took part.

The organization of the apparatus of state power and administration in the countries of people's democracy also had specific features. During the initial, democratic stage of the people's revo-

lution they eliminated immediately only the most reactionary parts of the old apparatus such as the army, the police, etc. All the other state institutions were refashioned gradually, in conformity with the requirements of socialist construction. Some countries retained traditional forms of parliamentary representation such as the Federal Assembly in Czechoslovakia and the Seym in Poland.

In the structure of people's democracy new forms of mass organizations (national front, people's committees, etc.) are combined with renovated old state institutions (parliament, local self-government, etc.) and democratic institutions (universal suffrage, multiplicity of parties).

The preservation of some elements of the old state apparatus certainly has some negative aspects. It strengthens the positions of the bourgeoisie in its struggle against socialist transformations, sustaining in it the hope that the old state apparatus will provide a base of support at a moment opportune for counter-revolution. This makes it essential that the working people maintain constant vigilance towards and control over the activity of those parts of the state apparatus in which the bourgeoisie retains its influence. Experience has shown that where this condition is not observed socialist gains may be seriously jeopardized. As the Hungarian Communists admit, this factor played its part during the counter-revolutionary rebellion in Hungary in October-November, 1956. "The victory of the socialist revolution in a relatively peaceful way gave the Hungarian bourgeoisie an advantage in that, although the economic foundation of its

power had been eliminated through expropriation, it had nevertheless retained its cadres and its active political role," said János Kádár, Chairman of the Hungarian Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Government. "A contributing factor was that after 1945, due to a peculiarity of development, we had not demolished the bourgeois state apparatus, with the exception of the gendarmerie and the army, but had changed it gradually, as a result of which the bourgeoisie had been able, for a long time and to a considerable extent even to retain its influence on state administration and the running of economic and cultural affairs."

The close co-operation of communist parties with democratic parties and mass organizations of working people enabled the national-democratic revolution to develop into a socialist revolution without civil war and the attendant destruction of productive forces.

There are several socialist countries today each of which has several political parties. For example, Poland has three parties: the Polish United Workers' Party, the United Peasants' Party and the Democratic Party; Czechoslovakia has five: the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the Czechoslovak Socialist Party, the Czechoslovak People's Party, the Slovak Reconstruction Party, and the Slovak Freedom Party.

Democratic parties take part alongside communist parties in governing their countries. For instance, the People's Chamber of the GDR, the supreme organ of state power, includes 127 deputies from the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, 52 deputies from the Liberal Democratic Party

of Germany, 52 deputies from the Christian Democratic Union of Germany, 52 deputies from the Democratic Peasants' Party of Germany, and 52 deputies from the National-Democratic Party of Germany.

The experience of the formation of socialist statehood in Cuba is not without interest, either. The Cuban socialist revolution aroused the broad masses of the people to involve themselves in the affairs of their society, ensuring their participation in running the state, protecting the country's security, maintaining public order and adopting major decisions.

Cuba's new state apparatus is staffed with representatives of the revolutionary army, the workers, peasants and progressive intelligentsia. A people's militia has been set up. The judicial system has been refashioned.

The revolution destroyed the old, bureaucratic system of local self-government and established in its place organs of revolutionary power—national co-ordinating committees consisting of representatives of the Communist Party, public organizations, central governmental bodies, and the armed forces.

The Cuban revolution also produced a special form of public administration, namely committees for the defence of the revolution, elected by a show of hands at township and neighbourhood meetings. They work alongside the people's militia in defending the gains of the people and protecting public order and help to mobilize the working people to tackle the pressing problems that come up. Embracing the majority of the population, these committees have not only made

a big contribution to the building of socialism, but have become a nation-wide school of state administration.

The Constitution, adopted in February, 1976, proclaimed Cuba a socialist republic in which all power belongs to the working people. In the words of Fidel Castro, Prime Minister of the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Cuba, "This power is based on the common ownership of the means of production and rests on a firm alliance of workers and peasants, guided by the working class and its organized Marxist-Leninist vanguard–the Communist Party of Cuba, the supreme leading force of society and the state."

The adoption of the Constitution and the establishment, on its basis, of an integral system of elected organs of power completed the process which led to the formation of the new Cuban state–one of the political forms of the revolutionary dictatorship of the working class.

CHAPTER III.

THE MAIN INSTRUMENT IN BUILDING SOCIALISM

The socialist revolution, which gives political power to the working people, signifies a sharp turning-point in the life of society generally and in the development of the state in particular. For the first time in history, the workers, peasants, artisans and working intellectuals, for centuries excluded from political life and debarred from government, become the masters of their country and stand at the helm of the state. The state is transformed from an instrument for suppressing the working people into an instrument of their power.

Dictatorship and Democracy

The young socialist state, Lenin said, is democratic in a new way, as it ensures democracy for the working people, and dictatorial in a new way, as it is directed against a tiny reactionary minority.

To fully grasp this idea one has to shed the widespread misconception that democracy and dictatorship are mutually exclusive. Either democracy, some people say, and hence no dictatorship, or the dictatorship of one class, and no democracy. This delusion stems from the erroneous notion that there exists some kind of supra-class, universal or, as it is sometimes called, "integral" democracy, i.e. democracy in general.

In actual fact democracy of this kind has never existed, nor could it. In any society where classes with opposing interests exist political power always serves the economically dominant class, no matter what democratic forms it may assume.

History confirms this at every step. Take, for instance, the slave-owning societies of ancient Rome or ancient Greece. There existed wide democracy there, but it was enjoyed only by slave-owners. In regard to the slaves it was a ruthless dictatorship which mercilessly suppressed the slightest manifestation of their discontent, let alone their uprisings. The state and its army held in subjection the population of the conquered countries. Some might say that such was the case only in ancient times. But let us take more recent examples.

In the capitalist countries, the political power of the bourgeoisie has an eminently democratic appearance, with regularly held general elections, the governments being accountable to parliaments, etc. But no sooner do the working people present their legitimate demands to the capitalists than the real face of the dictatorship of the big bourgeoisie shows through the democratic outer shell—"democratic" power takes the entrepreneurs' side, not stopping at repression, the dispatch of police and even troops to fight the workers, the breaking up of demonstrations, the arrest of workers' leaders, and so on.

As we can see, dictatorship and democracy can get along together extremely well. While functioning as a dictatorship for some classes, the state can at the same time be a democracy for

other classes. The whole point is what kind of dictatorship and what kind of democracy it is.

The state of proletarian dictatorship is a political organization which expresses and defends the interests of the working majority, and protects socialism against the aggressive actions of the enemies.

"History teaches us," Lenin said, "that no oppressed class ever did, or could, achieve power without going through a period of dictatorship, i.e. the conquest of political power and forcible suppression of the resistance always offered by the exploiters–a resistance that is most desperate, most furious, and that stops at nothing." [1]

This was the case in Russia after the victory of the socialist revolution. The bourgeoisie organized conspiracies and revolts, sabotage and provocations, resorted to slander and terror against leaders of the revolution, and sought to suborn the hesitant and vacillating. Aided by international imperialism, it united with the nobility in unleashing a civil war in the country. In their avid desire to wrest power from the working people and restore the old order, the counter-revolutionaries were willing to cede vast territories to foreign imperialists, to partition Russia and turn part of it into a colony. Fourteen imperialist states organized armed intervention against the young socialist republic. In the course of three years two united counter-revolutionary forces–foreign invaders and local landowners and capitalists–engulfed the country in bloodshed,

[1] V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 28, p. 458.

destroyed its industrial enterprises, towns and villages, and subjected the population to a hunger blockade.

In response to the violent actions of the overthrown exploiter classes, Soviet power was compelled to employ revolutionary violence.

When the working people gain political power they must display exceptional firmness and resolution in defending revolutionary gains. "The recent experience of the revolutionary movement provides graphic evidence that imperialism will stop at nothing, discarding all semblance of any kind of democracy, if a serious threat arises to the domination of monopoly capital and its political agents," Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, said. "It is prepared to trample upon the sovereignty of states and upon all legality, to say nothing of humanism. Slander, duping the public, economic blockade, bringing about hunger and dislocation, bribes and threats, terrorism, assassination of political leaders, and fascist-style pogroms—such is the armoury of present-day counter-revolution, which always operates in conjunction with international imperialist reaction." The working people must use their power to meet the overthrown exploiters' violence with revolutionary violence. This is the sacred right of any people who have risen in struggle to liberate themselves.

Following the Road to Socialism

The whole history of the exploiter classes is first and foremost a history of their struggle to

preserve and perpetuate their domination. Slave-owners mercilessly put down rebel slaves. Feudal lords suppressed with force numerous peasant revolts. The ideologists of these classes devised many different theories to prove the divine origin and permanence of the power of slave-owners and feudal lords.

After its advent to power the bourgeoisie, too, declared the capitalist system and its political rule to be perpetual and unshakable. The bourgeoisie spares no means in defending this idea. A vast army of politicians and ideologists in its pay works overtime to prove that private property will endure forever and the capitalist system and the bourgeois state are indestructible.

The working class is the only class in history which does not seek to perpetuate its rule and declares openly that it needs political power, its dictatorship only for the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, only in order to put an end once and for all to the exploitation of man by man, to radically transform social relations and create conditions obviating the need for the political domination of any class.

Insisting on the historical necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the founders of scientific communism, Marx, Engels and Lenin, invariably made it a point to stress its temporary, transitory character. During the transitional period the socialist state performs the twofold function: first, suppression of the resistance of the exploiter classes seeking to restore capitalism, and defence of the young socialist state against external enemies, and, second, solving the econom-

ic, organizational, cultural and educational tasks of building a socialist society.

The main content of proletarian dictatorship is constructive activity aimed at refashioning the economy and the whole order of life on socialist principles. Replacement of private capitalist ownership of the means of production with public ownership is the first step of the socialist state in this direction.

In no capitalist country is it possible to abolish the exploitation of man by man and build socialism without socializing the means of production to make them the collective property of the whole people. For under capitalism the means of production—the natural wealth (the land, coal, forests, etc.) and the wealth created by human labour (industrial enterprises, transport, machines, lathes, etc.) are the property of the bourgeoisie which uses them to enrich itself, to derive profit from the exploitation of hired labour.

After winning power the proletariat abolishes capitalist ownership through nationalization. The industrial and agricultural enterprises, transport, banks, foreign trade, large commercial enterprises, etc., which belonged to capitalists, become the property of the state, that is, of the whole people, who can now manage the economy.

When nationalization cannot be carried out immediately it is necessary to apply a whole series of measures leading to the establishment of workers' control over the operation of private enterprises. One such measure, conducted during the period of transition to socialism, is state capitalism, i.e. capitalism which is regulated and

controlled by the socialist state, which determines the conditions and limits of its existence.

The use of state capitalism, concessions and capitalist leases in conditions in which the proletariat has acquired political power does not signify that the class struggle has been superceded by a class peace with the bourgeoisie; it is the continuation of the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, but in a different form. It serves the purpose of consolidating the positions of socialism in the economy of the country and preparing conditions for the elimination of capitalist relations.

The methods, forms and rate of socialist nationalization depend on the conditions prevailing in a given country. In Russia, for instance, large enterprises were nationalized within a short space of time (December, 1917-June, 1918). This was necessitated by the acuteness of the class struggle and by sabotage on the part of the bourgeoisie. In the European countries of people's democracy the nationalization of capitalist enterprises was conducted in stages. First came the property of war criminals and collaborationists. Then followed gradual nationalization of other enterprises constituting the basis of the economy. As distinct from the USSR, where the property of landlords and capitalists was fully expropriated without compensation, in a number of countries of people's democracy some enterprises were redeemed from those groups of the national bourgeoisie which opposed imperialism and loyally co-operated with the workers' government.

Large capitalist agricultural enterprises can be

transformed into socialist ones by the same methods. They are either expropriated without compensation or redeemed, and become the property of the whole people, the basis upon which socialist agricultural enterprises are set up. The structure and organization of such enterprises and the methods of their establishment differ from country to country: they can be state farms as in the Soviet Union, state estates as in Yugoslavia, etc.

The socialist transformation of small-commodity peasant holdings in poorly developed countries is carried out primarily through the establishment of co-operatives: first peasants voluntarily join co-operatives for the marketing of farm produce, and then for its production.

In Russia, peasant associations for the joint purchase or sale of goods existed already before the revolution. Peasants willingly joined such co-operatives, in which, in order to sell the products of, let us say, ten families it was not necessary for all to abandon their work and go to the market: one person could easily cope with this task. But in such associations everyone continued to work individually. In addition, under capitalism co-operatives inevitably became dependent on large-scale traders and bankers, while kulaks held sway in the villages.

After the revolution peasants' co-operatives began to establish contacts, not with capitalists, but with the socialist state, to which they sold their produce and from which they purchased the goods needed by them. The state of the working people protected the village poor and middle

peasants against the exploitative aims of the kulaks. Understandably, co-operatives exercised an ever stronger appeal to the peasants, who gradually advanced from primitive forms of co-operation to higher ones. Seeing that farming collectively brought profits, they began to unite not only for selling the products of their labour, but also in order to work jointly. They pooled their plots of land, implements, livestock and labour power in what came to be known as collective farms.

In post-revolutionary Russia, then still an economically and culturally backward country, socialist industrialization and a cultural revolution were needed to make possible the building of socialism.

The socialist revolution deprived the capitalists of the possibility of exploiting the working people and gave the latter the factories, mines, railways and banks. But in order not to be wiped off the face of the earth by international imperialism, the young Soviet state had to build a powerful industry, to transform a backward agricultural country into a modern industrial power. First of all, it was necessary to develop heavy industry, mechanical engineering, metallurgy, power, fuel and chemical industries.

The industrialization of the country and the socialist transformation of agriculture laid the foundations of socialist society. But socialism means not only a well-developed economy, but also an advanced culture. A veritable cultural revolution, a revolution in the sphere of enlightenment of the masses, was needed in backward,

semi-literate Russia. In the first place, all working people had to be taught to read and write.

In its very first days the young socialist state tackled this task. The All-Russia Extraordinary Commission for the Elimination of Illiteracy organized all over the country special centres where tens of millions of men and women came in the evening to bend over the first Soviet readers. Tuition fees were abolished. The state began to pay monthly grants to the students of higher and specialized secondary schools.

The cultural revolution was accomplished in Russia during the first two decades of Soviet power. By the end of the 1930s the Soviet Union had become a country of almost 100 per cent literacy, had educated a multi-million workers' and peasants' intelligentsia, gained access to modern science, to which it began to make its contribution.

The class composition of society also changed basically. The abolition of private ownership eliminated the possibility of one class appropriating the products of the labour of another class. The parasitic classes living off the labour of others ceased to exist. No trace was left of the relations of domination and subjugation. Socialist society is a society of working people: workers, peasants and the intelligentsia. By 1939 the working class accounted for 32.5 per cent of the population and the collective-farm peasantry, 47.2 per cent.

Labour became the sole legitimate source of income for all members of socialist society. The socialist principle of distribution, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work", asserted itself. The socio-political and

ideological unity of society took shape on the basis of the identity of the working people's vital interests. Relations between classes and social groups became those of friendly co-operation.

There is no ground for clashes of class interests in socialist society. This does not mean, however, that the question of class struggle has become a thing of the past. There remains the class struggle's front against the capitalist world, against its subversive activity and influence within the country. The struggle against the survivals of capitalism continues and retains its class content, as it is waged against traditions and influences alien to socialism. This struggle is waged by the entire people.

With the victory of socialism the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat began to develop into the political organization of the entire people, progressing from the instrument of political domination of one class, which it was during the first stage of socialist construction, into an organ expressing the will and defending the interests of all classes and social groups, of the people as a whole.

The cardinal changes in the character, tasks and functions of the state were reflected and reaffirmed in the Constitution of the USSR, the third one in the history of the Soviet state, which was adopted in 1936. These changes included the transformation of the political basis of the state, the Soviets. Formerly organs of power of the workers and the poorest peasants, they now became Soviets of deputies representing all working people. This step signified more than a mere

change of name, reflected profound changes in the development of the Soviets, in which all the people were now represented.

The process of development of the state of proletarian dictatorship into a state of the whole people found expression also in the electoral system introduced by the Constitution of the USSR. The principles underlying the right to vote that had been in force during the period of transition from capitalism to socialism were replaced with new, democratic principles.

As noted earlier, throughout the transition period the right to vote was not universal. It was denied to persons who had had connections with the former exploiter classes. Now this restriction was abolished.

The 1936 Constitution guaranteed to Soviet man the right to work, education, rest and leisure, and maintenance in old age and in the event of sickness or disability. It reaffirmed for all Soviet citizens freedom of speech, the press, assembly, including holding of mass meetings, street processions and demonstrations.

The development of Soviet society was interrupted by the war German fascism launched against the USSR in 1941. In this war the Soviet Union lost 20 million of its sons and daughters. By its end two-thirds of Soviet cities lay in ruins. About 30 million people were left homeless. Almost half of all collective and state farms had been ransacked and ravaged.

But the victory over the aggressor in the war proved the viability and indestructibility of the

world's first socialist state. As the new 1977 Constitution of the USSR said, "This victory consolidated the influence and international standing of the Soviet Union and created new opportunities for growth of the forces of socialism, national liberation, democracy, and peace throughout the world." Within a short space of time the Soviet people restored the national economy to its prewar level and began rapidly to increase production.

By the end of the fifties not only the internal sources of danger that could lead to a restoration of capitalism had been eliminated, but the possibility of restoring capitalism from without by the forces of international imperialism had disappeared. This was due to the sharply increased economic and military strength of the Soviet Union and the changed correlation of world forces brought about by the formation of the world socialist system.

In the sixties, thanks to the valiant efforts of the working class, the collective-farm peasantry and the people's intelligentsia, a developed socialist society was built in the Soviet Union. It possesses a powerful material and technical basis which reveals the advantages of the socialist economic system at every level. The leading place in its social structure is occupied by the working class, which accounts for more than 60 per cent of the population.

The state of developed socialism expresses the will and defends the interests of all classes and social groups, of all the Soviet people.

The greater social homogeneity of Soviet

society and the higher level of democracy are reflected and given legal expression in the new Constitution of the USSR adopted in 1977 after a nationwide discussion.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STATE OF SOCIALIST SOCIETY

Socialism is a system free of not only antagonistic classes, but of any exploiter elements in general. Under socialism the political power of working people represents already the dictatorship of the whole people and not of one class only.

The state occupies a special place in the system of political organization of socialist society. With the victory of socialism and the abolition of the exploiter classes its function of suppression ceases to exist, while the economic, organizational, cultural and educational functions increase. Concentrating in its hands all the threads of the economic life of the country, the state of the whole people is the main organizer of social production. It plans development of the national economy, ensures material and technical supply, and selects and appoints leading executives.

The socialist state also performs a cultural and educational function, concerning itself with the development of public education and enlightenment, science, literature and the arts.

It is pointed out in Article 28 of the new Soviet Constitution: "The USSR steadfastly pursues a Leninist policy of peace and stands for strengthening of the security of nations and broad international co-operation.

"The foreign policy of the USSR is aimed at ensuring international conditions favourable for building communism in the USSR, safeguarding the state interests of the Soviet Union, consolidat-

ing the positions of world socialism, supporting the struggle of peoples for national liberation and social progress, preventing wars of aggression, achieving universal and complete disarmament, and consistently implementing the principle of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems."

The political system of developed socialism constitutes a smoothly functioning system of government by the people which guarantees that the will of the masses will have free expression, that they will participate not only in the formation of representative organs of power, but also in the elaboration and adoption of decisions of major state importance and in control over their implementation.

Socialism, which establishes public ownership of the means of production, shifts emphasis from a formal recognition of democratic rights and freedoms to the creation of social, economic and political conditions for the full exercise by all of the rights granted by the state, for active participation in running its affairs. Herein lies a fundamental difference between socialist and bourgeois democracy.

The Mechanism of Socialist Democracy

The Soviet people exercise state power through the Soviets of People's Deputies, which are the political basis of the USSR. Local Soviets (there are over 50,000 of them in the country) are the organs of state power in the territories, regions, areas, districts, cities and townships. The supreme

organs of state power in the fifteen Union and twenty autonomous republics are their Supreme Soviets.

The unified system of supreme and local organs of state power is based on the principles of democratic centralism, which means that a higher Soviet not only supervises the activity of lower Soviets, but directs them and shoulders responsibility for their work. On the other hand, all Soviets as bodies elected by the people are accountable to those whom they represent.

The strength of the Soviets lies not only in the fact that in all their activity they rely on the broadest sections of the people—although this in itself basically distinguishes the Soviet political system from every other, even the most democratic form of power under the bourgeois system. The main thing is that in socialist society the people are not merely the basis of political power, but an active participant in its exercise. Under socialism the essence of democracy lies precisely in getting as many people as possible to participate in governing the state, and this presupposes, naturally, the possibility of not only electing one's representatives to organs of power, but also of co-operating with them actively in the solution of major and minor tasks, of controlling their activity.

What real possibility of participating in government does a common man have in the conditions of bourgeois democracy? Once in four or five years he says Yes or No to a candidate in an election. But does he select his own candidate for deputy? Does he work out the programme the deputy has to carry out? Does he control his

activity after the election? The answer to all these questions is No.

In conditions of socialist democracy it is otherwise.

One of its principal advantages over bourgeois democracy is that the participation of the working people in forming the representative organs of state power is not limited to recording a vote. They handle the whole business of organizing and holding elections, from the nomination of candidates to the tallying of votes.

How are candidates for deputies to the Soviets selected?

In the Soviet Union no one has the right to nominate himself or herself as a candidate. This right belongs to public organizations and collectives of working people, who select from among their ranks worthy candidates for deputies to organs of state power. Soviet deputies are not professional parliamentarians, but workers, collective farmers, engineers, teachers, agronomists, writers, doctors, etc., who combine their activity as deputies with the performance of their regular duties. (Take the example of the Dynamo plant in Moscow. Among its workers are one deputy to the USSR Supreme Soviet, three deputies to the Moscow City Soviet, and 19 deputies to the District Soviet.) This system enables them to be always among their constituents, to share their interests, to maintain close contacts with work collectives, to take an active part in production and socio-political life and hence to represent as effectively as possible their wishes in the Soviet. At the same time, the constituents can constantly

supervise the activity of their envoys, make their suggestions and wishes known to them, and criticize them for mistakes.

At pre-election meetings, in which practically the whole electorate participates, every one has the right to propose any candidate for discussion, to assess critically the merits and demerits of a nominee. It is precisely at this point, at the very outset of the election campaign and not during the casting of votes, that the contest among candidates for deputies takes place. After a wide-ranging public discussion of political, business and personal qualities of each of the possible candidates the general meeting of the collective of a factory or university, a mill or a collective farm gives preference to the worthiest candidate, whose name is entered in the lists for secret ballot. As far as the process of voting is concerned, it is the final act in which the people give the force of law to their own decisions.

In accordance with the Constitution of the USSR, the Soviets are elected directly by the people on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage, by secret ballot.

The law does not invest the right to vote with any restrictions on grounds of social or property status, past activity, religious convictions, or nationality.

All Soviets are elected directly. By voting personally and not through electors, the Soviet voter decides by himself whom to entrust to represent his personal and state interests in the organs of power.

The law scrupulously guards the secrecy of vot-

ing, making it a criminal offence to, in any way, attempt to bring pressure to bear on the electorate, to prevent it from exercising its right to vote, or to tamper with ballot-papers. Article 99 of the new Constitution says that "control over voters' exercise of the franchise is inadmissible".

On June 19, 1977, elections to the local organs of state power—village, township, district, city and regional Soviets—were held in the Soviet Union. The turnout of voters was 99 per cent. What accounts for this widespread political activity?

Before answering this question it should be noted that there is no law in the Soviet Union making voting in elections obligatory. Participation in elections is regarded as the right of a citizen and not a duty. Therefore, the reasons for this high degree of involvement should be sought elsewhere.

One of them is that the last elections were to renovate the composition of those organs of power whose day-to-day work is particularly closely connected with the population: it is the local Soviets that dispose of the land, direct the work of local industrial enterprises, organize the work of schools and other educational establishments, ensure free medical service, the timely appointment and payment of state pensions, the protection of public order and of state and personal property, etc. Hence, it is a matter of direct concern to the voters who will represent their interests in the local Soviets.

Another reason is that the citizens of the country widely support the economic and social

policy of the state and its administrative organs. Its credo is this: "The supreme goal of social production under socialism is the fullest possible satisfaction of the people's growing material, and cultural and intellectual requirements." (Article 15 of the USSR Constitution.) This course accords, naturally, with the interests of all Soviet people.

In order to enable every citizen to exercise his constitutional right to elect representatives to organs of power, 173,204 electoral precincts were set up in towns and villages as well as at railway stations, air, sea and river ports, aboard ships at sea on the polling day, in geological and other expeditions and at the Arctic and Antarctic stations.

All told, more than 2.2 million deputies were elected. The composition of the newly elected Soviets reflects the structure of Soviet society: most of them (about 70 per cent) are workers and farmers; more than half are non-party people; every other deputy is a woman. Approximately 45 per cent of the deputies were elected for the first time.

Incidentally, systematic renovation of the organs of power is a typical feature of the Soviet way of life. Its purpose is to give as many people as possible an opportunity to gain experience in managing the affairs of state and solving the tasks that face the country. The result is that during the 41 years the third Constitution of the USSR has been in effect more than 25 million people have had experience in working in the Soviets.

The democratic character of socialist government manifests itself not only in the method

by which the representative organs of state power are formed, but also in the forms and methods used in the work performed by the deputies to the Soviets.

The wide sphere of action of the local Soviets includes guaranteeing observance of laws and protection of the rights of citizens and guidance of all local economic and cultural development.

As organs of power, the Soviets take part in the performance of all the functions of the state. At the same time they are representative organs of the population and as such see to it that people's requirements are satisfied.

Underlying all the activity of the Soviets is a striving to carry out in the best way possible the will of the electorate, the instructions given them at pre-election meetings which express the wishes of the majority of constituents. These instructions–electors' mandates–concern both general questions on home and foreign policy and concrete ones pertaining to the construction of new public transport facilities, hospitals, stadiums, schools, apartment houses, etc.

The contact between the deputies and the electorate becomes particularly close after elections. Deputies receive citizens, listen to their suggestions and complaints, see to it that they are promptly looked into, and take measures to eliminate the causes of the complaints. Twice a year deputies to local Soviets report to the constituents on their work in the Soviets, on what is being done to carry out the mandates given them during the election campaign. In the event of a deputy neglecting his duties to his constituents, failing

to carry out their mandates or to report to them, they have the right to recall him from the Soviet.

The lofty duties of deputies are backed up by the extensive rights they are granted. One of these is the right to address an inquiry to a state organ or an official, to which the latter must give a prompt reply. On instructions from the Soviet a deputy can inspect the work of any enterprise and institution under the jurisdiction of the Soviet, and all the officials concerned are obliged to provide him with all the required documents.

"Deputies shall be assured conditions for the unhampered and effective exercise of their rights and duties," says Article 106 of the Constitution. The law guarantees the immunity of deputies and their labour rights. No deputy can be dismissed or transferred to a lower-paid job without the sanction of the Soviet. The state refunds any expenses incurred by a deputy in the performance of his functions, such as those arising from correspondence, telephone calls, etc.

The Supreme Soviet, the highest organ of state power in the USSR, has the unrestricted right to supervise the activity of any state body, including the government.

The Supreme Soviet of the USSR consists of two chambers—the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities. The former represents the common interests of all the citizens of the country irrespective of their nationality. The latter represents the specific interests of the big and small nations inhabiting the country.

The Soviet of the Union is elected on the basis of one deputy per 300,000 of the population. This

system cannot be used in the election of the Soviet of Nationalities, for it would result in preponderance of deputies from the Russian or Ukrainian peoples. In order to ensure the actual, i.e. political and not arithmetical equality of the chambers, the Soviet of Nationalities is elected as follows: 32 deputies from each Union republic, eleven deputies from each autonomous republic, five deputies from each autonomous region, and one deputy from each autonomous area.

The present USSR Supreme Soviet has 1,517 deputies. More than half of them are workers and collective farmers, that is, direct producers of the material values of society. The rest are specialists from every sector of the economy, heads of enterprises and institutions, teachers, workers in science and culture, and Party and trade union functionaries. This composition enables the Supreme Soviet to solve competently, with account taken of the interests of the working people, the problems of national importance.

At a joint sitting of its chambers, the Supreme Soviet elects the collective president of the country–the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, forms the Union government–the Council of Ministers, elects the Supreme Court, and appoints the Procurator-General.

The Presidium, which is accountable to the Supreme Soviet, consists of 39 members–the Chairman, the First Vice-Chairman, fifteen vice-chairmen (from the fifteen Union republics), each of whom is the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of his or her republic, the Secretary, and 21 members.

The Union government includes the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, the Vice-Chairmen, the Chairmen of the Councils of Ministers of the Union republics, Ministers and Chairmen of the State Committees of the USSR.

Highly competent and possessing great experience, all of the ministers are leading specialists in their fields, former heads of big construction projects, enterprises or scientific institutions. Among them are engineers, agronomists, economists, teachers, and doctors.

It is noteworthy that most of them are of worker or peasant stock. For instance, the Minister of the Electro-technical Industry, Alexei Antonov, started his working career as a fitter. After finishing a polytechnical institute he worked in a plant as an engineer, shop superintendent and head engineer. In the course of the eight years preceding his appointment as head of a ministry he was in charge of the Leningrad Economic District.

The government is accountable to the Supreme Soviet. As a rule, its members are deputies to the supreme organ of power and as such are directly and personally controlled by their constituents. In the interim between sessions of the Supreme Soviet the government is accountable to the Presidium.

The government runs the economy of the country and heads the entire system of management for industry, transport, building and agriculture. Within its field of authority falls such tasks as ensuring public order, protecting the rights of citizens, and organizing the armed forces. The government determines the general line

of the state's foreign policy. It has the right to initiate legislation.

The activity of the state apparatus is controlled by the people through the system of people's control bodies, based on people's control groups and posts at Soviets, construction projects, in shops, institutions and enterprises. They are staffed with about 10 million unpaid volunteers–fitters and dairy workers, book-keepers and engineers, scientists and journalists. Twice a year the most experienced and competent representatives of all professions and trades are elected at meetings, by a show of hands, to people's control groups and posts.

The work of local bodies is co-ordinated by paid staff–district, city and republican committees and the Committee of People's Control of the USSR. They account for roughly 0.1 per cent of the total number of people's inspectors.

What are the functions and rights of people's inspectors? "People's control bodies shall check on the fulfilment of state plans and assignments, combat breaches of state discipline, localistic tendencies, narrow departmental attitudes, mismanagement, extravagance and waste, red tape and bureaucracy, and help improve the working of the state machinery." (Article 92.) They spotlight shortcomings in the work of enterprises and institutions, pinpoint their causes, and seek ways of correcting them.

For example, for some time a number of Moscow shops were irregularly supplied with children's goods. The Committee of People's Control verified the complaints of the population and found out that some light industry enterprises

had reduced the production of articles for children. The fact is that in the Soviet Union the prices of children's goods (footwear, clothing) are much lower than those of goods for adults, and only slightly exceed production costs. It is therefore more profitable for enterprises to produce goods for adults, which bring in greater returns and hence improve the profit-cost ratio.

However, the making of profits cannot be an aim in itself for a socialist enterprise. The aim of production under socialism is the fullest possible satisfaction of the requirements of the people. The Committee of People's Control pointed this out to some heads of light industry enterprises. The material collected by it was examined by the Council of Ministers, which instructed the Ministry of Light Industry to increase the production of goods for children.

If an enterprise or even a whole branch of industry underfulfils its output plan a people's control organ studies the plan, examines the reserves of production and the organization of labour. These are complicated matters, and therefore more and more persons with a high level of general and professional competence, specialists in their fields, are drawn into the work of people's control bodies.

In the Soviet Union people express their will also through a system of mass public organizations: the trade unions, the Young Communist League, and various societies such as book lovers' clubs, associations for friendship with the peoples of foreign countries, etc.

The trade unions, which embrace 98 per cent

of all working people, have a membership of over 113 million.

The Soviet trade unions take a direct part in managing production, in social and economic planning and in protecting the environment, keep an eye on price formation, distribute the housing built at the expense of enterprises, organize the workers' rest and recreation, and so on. The production plan and work quotas cannot be approved without the participation of the trade union committee of the enterprise concerned. Together with the management the trade union establishes internal regulations, awards skill ratings and fixes pay rates.

Every year collective agreements between trade union committees and the administration are concluded at all the enterprises of the country. The agreements stipulate the mutual obligations of the administration and the workers as regards plan fulfilment and the raising of the quality of output and establish the order of payment of wages and bonuses. They contain special sections devoted to safety measures, improvement of working conditions and medical service, state the number of free and low-cost vouchers for health resorts, holiday homes and tourist centres the employees will get, contain provisions for the construction of kindergartens and creches, health-building out-of-town camps, etc. There are stipulations about the work of the canteens and the club and the construction of houses and sports facilities. In a word, nothing that concerns a working man is forgotten.

The draft agreement is discussed at a meeting where every employee can state his opinion and

suggest additions and amendments. As long as the collective agreement is in operation the trade union of the enterprise keeps watch on how the administration carries it out.

The trade unions supervise observance of labour legislation. Their technical inspectors oversee adherence to safety rules and check up on the state of industrial hygiene and labour protection in industry, transport, building and agriculture. The inspectors are, as a rule, experienced engineers who have a thorough knowledge of production, are independent of the management, and enjoy extensive rights: they can at any moment conduct an inspection of an enterprise or construction project; on their demand the administration must provide all the required documents and give explanations in the event of a violation of safety and labour protection rules; no new enterprise or shop can be put into operation without their consent.

For instance, from the very outset of the designing of the Volzhsky Auto Works in Togliatti, built with the assistance of FIAT of Italy, the engineering workers' union saw to it that the working conditions accorded with standards established in the USSR. Italian specialists had to make considerable adjustments in their calculations, for FIAT's sanitary and hygienic standards are somewhat lower than Soviet ones: a higher degree of air pollution is allowed, and some facilities which are a must at Soviet enterprises are not provided.

At the demand of technical inspectors the system of air ventilation and conditioning was made three to five times more powerful, the shops were

made higher and more spacious, and the passages between machine tools and conveyer lines were widened. All in all, during the construction, putting into production and the final period of adjustment of the Togliatti factory the trade union made more than 500 suggestions which considerably improved the working conditions and safety facilities.

The trade unions enjoy the right of disposing of the state social insurance funds, out of which they pay temporary disability allowances. The workers make no contribution to these funds. It is the duty of the administration, which remits, through banks, insurance sums to a trade union's current account.

The social insurance system enables people to enjoy equal rights irrespective of the size of their earnings, when it comes to sanatorium or health resort accommodation or the receipt of temporary disability or maternity allowances.

Article 6 of the USSR Constitution says, "The leading and guiding force of Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system, of all state organizations, is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The CPSU exists for the people and serves the people." Such leadership, however, does not imply actual management of the affairs of the country, which is carried out, in keeping with the law, by the Soviets.

The division of functions between the Party bodies and the Soviets is seen from the example of the way national long-term economic development plans are drawn up. Congresses of the Party and meetings of its Central Committee adopt

guidelines for such plans and submit them to the supreme organs of state power.

For instance, the 25th Congress of the CPSU, held in February-March, 1976, adopted "Guidelines for the Development of the National Economy of the USSR for 1976-1980", on the basis of which the USSR government and the governments of the Union republics worked out documents which became law, after being discussed in the commissions of the USSR Supreme Soviet, and the Supreme Soviets of the Union Republics, and adopted by sessions of these supreme organs of power.

The second aspect of the Party's political leadership is expressed in its right to authoritatively intervene in the process of current policy-making when there are sufficient grounds for doing so.

It stands to reason that such interference does not mean that the Party has the right to countermand the orders of the organs of power and administration and violate democratic procedures established by law. It presupposes actions taken within the framework of the law, not outside it. It takes the form of publicly raising major questions of current policy, of explaining to the public the importance and urgency of such questions and indicating ways to solve them.

Rights and Freedoms of the Individual

"In accordance with the communist ideal–'The free development of each is the condition of the free development of all'–the state pursues the aim of giving citizens more and more real opportu-

nities to apply their creative energies, abilities, and talents, and to develop their personalities in every way."

So states Article 20 of the new Constitution of the USSR, already the fourth in the sixty years' history of the Soviet state. Socialist society is a dynamically developing, constantly improving organism. During the forty years since the adoption of the third Constitution such profound changes have taken place that it became necessary to summarize and fix them in a new Fundamental Law of the country.

What is the essence of these changes?

First, instead of the foundations of the socialist economy established by the mid-thirties, the Soviet Union has today a mature, technically advanced economic system in town and the countryside, based on the complete domination of socialist property. This system has taken shape in the past forty years. In 1923 the Soviet Union accounted for roughly one per cent of world industrial output and almost 8 per cent of the population of the planet. Today, with 6 per cent of the world's population, it contributes 20 per cent of world industrial output. Its industry produces today as much as the industry of the whole world produced in 1950.

Second, a profound process of drawing together of all classes and social groups has been taking place. The social homogeneity of society is growing as the basic distinctions between physical and mental labour and between working conditions in town and country are being rapidly obliterated. A new historical community—the Soviet people—has taken shape on the basis of the iden-

tity of aims of the more than one hundred big and small nations inhabiting the country.

Third, Soviet society has made tremendous cultural progress. Illiteracy was wiped out long ago. Two-thirds of the gainfully employed population have a higher or secondary education. The period 1971-75 saw the completion, in the main, of the transition to universal compulsory secondary (ten-year) schooling.

Fourth, Soviet socialist democracy has advanced considerably. Today almost every adult takes part in running the affairs of state and society. Suffice it to note that 2.2 million deputies and more than 30 million non-staff activists are working in the Soviets.

Many other facts could be cited, to show that Soviet power has effected tremendous socio-economic transformations, put an end once and for all to the exploitation of man by man and to class antagonisms and national strife, and established a genuine democratic state for the working people. The example of many states shows that proclamation of democracy, of rights and freedoms, does not at all signify that they are being really implemented.

Freedoms and rights are meaningful when their proclamation is backed up materially, when their implementation is guaranteed, when they become part and parcel of the way of life. This is exactly the kind of democracy that exists in socialist society.

For the first time in mankind's history, the socialist society built in the USSR has filled the concept of "democracy" with real content. In deeds and not only in words, it has provided

working people with genuine freedoms and democratic rights, well-being and firm confidence in the future, which are unthinkable in any capitalist country.

"We have built a society free from monopolist oligarchy domination, free from the fear of crises, unemployment, free from social catastrophes," Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, said at the 1976 Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties of Europe. "We have built a society of people who are equal in the broadest sense of the word, people who know neither class, property, race nor any other such privileges, a society which not only proclaims human rights, but guarantees the conditions under which they can be exercised."

What are the rights and freedoms of Soviet citizens?

There are socio-economic rights—the right to work, to rest and leisure, to material maintenance in old age and in case of sickness or disability, to education, to medical assistance, the right to own personal property.

The political rights or democratic freedoms of citizens provide for equality irrespective of sex, nationality or race, freedom of speech, the press, assembly, including holding of mass meetings, street processions and demonstrations, the right to unite in mass organizations, the right to elect and be elected to all organs of power.

Individual freedoms include inviolability of the person and home, privacy of correspondence, freedom of conscience, the right of the accused to defence.

Central to the development of democracy is

the creation of conditions effectively guaranteeing the equality of all citizens. How are civic rights guaranteed in the USSR?

Let us take the right to work, the most important social right of the individual—not only because all material and spiritual values and means of subsistence are created by labour, but also because only in labour does man realize his capabilities, assert himself, and become aware of his usefulness and importance.

The five-year plans on the basis of which the national economy develops take strict account of the availability and natural growth of labour power, the influence of scientific and technical progress on it, and other factors.

The plans for personnel training are dovetailed with the requirements and prospects of development of every sector of the national economy, thanks to which every young person can count on getting a job according to his or her profession or skill. In the Soviet Union, the right of every citizen to work is not taken to mean merely an opportunity to get a job of any sort in order to earn a living wage, but is a real right to skilled work according to a man's educational level, training, and interests.

Unemployment was wiped out in the country half a century ago, and since then the growth in the number of jobs available has been always ahead of the growth of available manpower.

The right to work is strictly protected by law. Soviet legislation does not tolerate any restrictions in employment on grounds of sex, race or nationality, attitude towards religion, or social origin.

The right to work is legally guaranteed by a ban on dismissing an employee without consent of the trade union committee. If the trade union regards the reasons stated by the administration as insufficient it withholds its permission, and in this case the labour contract cannot be cancelled.

And what about persons affected by the reorganization of enterprises?

In such cases it is the duty of the administration to provide employment to the persons, dismissed as a result of the reorganization, even if the enterprise concerned has no jobs to which these persons could be transferred. With the consent of the person to be dismissed, it finds employment for him at another enterprise. When travel is involved, appropriate compensation is paid, together with a resettlement allowance, and housing is provided.

Labour, Karl Marx said, is the eternal natural condition of human life. However, it has not become such a condition for a considerable part of the planet's population. There are more than 500 million unemployed and 800 million illiterate persons in the world today. Neither the former nor the latter can be found in the USSR, but this does not mean that there are no other problems. Knowledge once acquired no longer lasts a man his whole life, as was the case in the past. It must be constantly updated, otherwise even a highly-qualified specialist can be found, within a few years, not to measure up to the demands of the scientific and technological revolution, unless he has continued his studies.

The problems are formidable but they are being solved. Out of the 94 million Soviet people who

are studying (total population: 260 million in 1977), more than 30 million are learning new trades at special courses or directly on the job, at the expense of the enterprise. This is one of the material guarantees of the constitutionally proclaimed right of Soviet citizens to work, "(that is, to guaranteed employment and pay in accordance with the quantity and quality of their work, and not below the state-established minimum), including the right to choose their trade or profession, type of job and work in accordance with their inclinations, abilities, training and education, with due account of the needs of society." (Article 40.)

The right to work is directly connected with the right to education, which is guaranteed by its being free as well as by the payment of monthly state grants to students and the provision of other privileges to them, the extensive network of regular, correspondence and evening specialized secondary and higher schools, [1] the improvement of the vocational guidance system, and the creation of every condition for self-education.

In order to cope with challenging socio-economic tasks the Soviet state had to raise, within a comparatively short space of time, the cultural level of more than one hundred nations and nationalities. In the years of intensive development of the cultural revolution 52 peoples in national areas were provided with their own written languages. At the same time it became more

[1] At present the evening and correspondence schools have a student body of five million. Those who study without discontinuing work have a shorter working week or working day, receiving half of their wages for the time they are released for study.

and more necessary for the non-Russian peoples to know Russian in order to communicate with one another inside the USSR and to be able to gain access to world culture.

"Citizens of the USSR of different races and nationalites have equal rights," says the Constitution of the USSR. The full equality of nations implies the equality of languages. It is in place to note here that this year's first-graders in Soviet schools received readers in more than 90 languages of peoples of the USSR.

How is the question of which language a seven-year-old citizen of a national republic will use when beginning his studies decided in practice? Let us take the example of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Latvia has a population of 2.5 million, of whom more than 1.3 million are Letts. The rest are Russians, Byelorussians, Poles, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Germans, Estonians and others. "Purely Latvian" families use, naturally, one language—Lettish, while mixed ones use either Lettish or Russian, the international language of the peoples of the USSR. Therefore, there are two groups of schools: Lettish and Russian. There are 864 schools in the republic. Instruction in Lettish is given in 512 and in Russian, in 205. Besides, 147 schools use both languages.

All schools give obligatory teaching of one foreign language (in Latvia it is German, English or French), and optional teaching of Russian in Lettish schools and of Lettish in Russian schools. In both cases almost 100 per cent of the pupils take advantage of this opportunity.

"It is necessary to pass the final examination

in a foreign language to get one's graduation diploma," says Leon Geikin, a Lettish school principal in the town of Stučka. "There are no examinations in Russian in Lettish schools, while Russian schools do not test their pupils' knowledge of Lettish. Knowledge of Russian enables Letts to enter any higher school in the Soviet Union, read much more of the literature on their chosen subject or field that is to be found in the republic, and have a wide choice of magazines and books. Finally, children know as well as their parents do, that through Russian they can communicate with the dozens of other nationalities inhabiting the USSR. Besides, Russian is one of the six world languages. One can only pity the exertions of our ideological adversaries who portray the desire of the young citizens of Latvia and other republics to learn Russian as an indication of the 'forcible Russification' of the national minorities. They are 'concerned' that the number of study hours allotted to the Russian language and literature is only slightly smaller than that devoted to the mother tongue, but pass over in silence the fact that it is an optional programme. As regards mixed marriages, which are so frequent in our town and our republic, they in no way affect attendance at Lettish lessons."

In keeping with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in force since 1976, the availability of work and the guarantees of employment must be supplemented with the right to fair and favourable working conditions, a satisfactory standard of living, including sufficient nourishment, clothing and housing, social security, and medical assistance.

These requirements of the Covenant are complied with in the Soviet Union. For instance, the principle of equal pay for equal work is anchored in law and strictly abided by. Annual paid holidays are enjoyed by all working people without exception. Millions of them go to sanatoria, holiday centres and hotels free of charge or at greatly reduced charges. In 1976 alone 45 million wage and salary earners and members of their families received trade union vouchers for these establishments.

The well-being of Soviet people grows steadily. In sixty years the national income of the country has increased 65-fold. Real incomes per head of the population double every fifteen years. But well-being cannot be judged by quantitative indicators alone, or, in other words, by the volume of commodities. Well-being as understood in a socialist society means having confidence in the future, the opportunity to receive any type of education, and a way of life which provides conditions for creative activity, self-assertion, and intellectual advancement. These and many other achievements of actually existing socialism are fixed in legal form in the new Soviet Constitution.

Take, for instance, the housing problem, one of the most burning problems in the world. Providing the population of the planet with decent housing calls for building at least another 200 million flats. The actual number built annually is only a little over 10 million, of which the Soviet Union contributes 2.2 million. The problem grows in acuteness because of the increasing rate of population growth.

Such is the situation in which the Soviet Union

proclaims man's constitutional right to a housing. Article 44: "Citizens of the USSR have the right to housing.

"This right is ensured by the development and upkeep of state and socially-owned housing; by assistance for co-operative and individual house building; by fair distribution, under public control, of the housing that becomes available through fulfilment of the programme of building well-appointed dwellings, and by low rents and low charges for utility services. Citizens of the USSR shall take good care of the housing allocated to them."

This, again, is not a mere declaration on paper. True, there still are difficulties. The war of 1941-45 forced upon the country, reduced to ruins and ashes more than 1,700 cities and settlements and 70,000 villages, rendering 30 million people homeless. A tremendous effort was needed to house people. Here are some figures showing the scale of housing construction carried out during the postwar five-year-plan periods: about 201 million square metres of gross (rentable) area in 1946-50, 241 million in 1951-55, 474 million in 1956-60, 491 million in 1961-65, 519 million in 1966-70, 545 million in 1971-75, and the plan for 1976-80 envisages another 550 million square metres.

What do these figures represent? In 1971-75 alone 56 million people received new or better housing. Every day 5,000 flats are made available. It is now possible to allocate housing on the basis of one flat to a family, a rule which at present is observed in 90 cases out of 100. It will be recalled that rent in the USSR is much lower than in the West, claiming an average of

one per cent of the family budget, and about four per cent together with utilities charges. Moreover, it remains stable.

Specialists estimate that the aim of providing every family with a flat of its own will be achieved in the next few years. The forecast is based primarily on the rate of growth of the housing stock, which is five times faster than the rate of population growth.

The next stage will be a room for every member of the family and then a room for every member plus an extra one.

Medical assistance in the USSR is free. There are 33 doctors and paramedical personnel per 10,000 inhabitants–a higher proportion than in any other country. "Citizens of the USSR have the right to health protection... to maintenance in old age, in sickness, and in the event of complete or partial disability..." (Articles 42-43). All citizens have the right to social maintenance, while all wage and salary earners are covered by social insurance, which is financed by the state, as distinct from the majority of capitalist countries. State pensions are received by more than 45 million people, or 17 per cent of the population.

There are practically no restrictions on the political rights and freedoms of the individual in the USSR, the only exception being that in exercising them no harm must be done to other people or to society as a whole. For example, the law forbids propaganda of war or racial or national enmity or impairment of the dignity of a people.

At the same time, all who want to further a common cause by criticizing shortcomings and

suggesting ways of eliminating them have at their disposal the press, radio and television and the rostrums of meetings.

The organizing of nationwide discussion of major bills and documents affecting every one is one of the forms of enlisting the participation of the greatest number of people in the running of the country. This practice helps to elicit all points of view and take account of all useful suggestions. Over the recent years such discussions have been held on the draft fundamentals of legislation on health protection, labour, public education, the land and its mineral resources, water resources, and monuments of history and culture and, finally, the draft of the new Constitution of the USSR.

People's amendments to and remarks on the published draft laws are printed in newspapers and magazines. During the nationwide discussion of the draft "Guidelines for the Development of the National Economy of the USSR for 1976-1980" three of the national dailies–*Pravda, Izvestia* and *Trud*–printed about 200 readers' letters every week. Volume after volume of proposals accumulated in the USSR Supreme Soviet. They contain both favourable and critical comments, amendments, rephrasing of articles which were all thoroughly studied by the preparatory working commission and then by the deputies who were members of the standing commissions of both chambers of the Soviet Parliament.

Thousands and thousands of people send their comments on the most important bills, many of which are taken into account in the final version.

That is the way most of the major legislative acts come into being in the USSR: after nationwide discussion and analysis and consideration of the numerous amendments and proposals. This is a deliberate political line, and the new Constitution gives legal enforcement to this procedure in the adoption of the most important state acts: "Major matters of state shall be submitted to nationwide discussion and put to a popular vote (referendum)." (Article 5.)

Great attention is paid in the Soviet Union to the manner in which letters from citizens are handled. This subject was brought up at the 25th Congress of the CPSU in 1976, and in the same year the CPSU Central Committee adopted a special decision instructing the editorial boards of the nationwide and local newspapers and magazines, radio and TV stations "regularly to make public letters from working people and reports on follow-up measures, actively to use the results of the analysis of the editorial mail-bag for the purpose of preparing and making public material on topical themes, to give wider coverage to questions of organization of work with citizens' letters and oral statements, to bring before the public instances of bureaucratic methods and red tape in handling working people's justified complaints".

In their letters to periodicals people write about their worries and concerns, and criticize deficiencies in the administrative apparatus. Nor do they lose sight of social processes, economic, moral and ethical problems. By tradition, all letters made public by the press, radio or television are treated as official inquiries to the relevant minis-

tries or departments and require substantive replies from ministers and other state officials, executives and members of staffs in the judiciary, the procurator's office and organs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This shows the common interest there is in finding solutions to the problems which have evoked criticism.

The new Constitution gives every citizen "the right to submit proposals to state bodies and public organizations for improving their activity, and to criticize shortcomings in their work". (Article 49.) The officials concerned are obliged to examine proposals and requests by citizens, to reply to them and to take due action, doing so within terms set by the law. Persecution for criticism is prohibited.

The mass media in the imperialist states often wage clamorous propaganda campaigns in connection with what they call "persecution of believers in the USSR". They allege that believers are even punished as criminals. All this is a pure invention. Article 52 of the Soviet Constitution says:

"Citizens of the USSR are guaranteed freedom of conscience, that is, the right to profess or not to profess any religion, and to conduct religious worship or atheistic propaganda. Incitement of hostility or hatred on religious grounds is prohibited.

"In the USSR, the church is separated from the state, and the school from the church."

Soviet legislation ensures to all citizens freedom to determine their attitude towards religion: to believe or not to believe in God, to have or not to have religious views, to adopt another

faith, to join religious associations. All this is a matter of conscience, an inalienable right of every citizen.

Soviet laws (Article 143 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation and the corresponding articles of the criminal codes of all the Union republics) make it a criminal offence to obstruct the performance of religious rites. There is an unconditional ban on any discrimination against believers: refusal of employment or enrolment at an educational establishment, dismissal from work or expulsion from an educational establishment on account of their religious views are also punishable as criminal offences.

Observance of the legislation on the status of religious organizations is supervised by the Committee for Religious Affairs under the USSR Council of Ministers.

In the USSR there are more than 20,000 functioning Orthodox, Catholic, Lutheran and Old Believers' churches, Buddhist temples, prayer-houses of Evangelical Christian-Baptists, Seventh-Day Adventists, etc., and 19 monasteries and convents. Religious associations have trained priests at their disposal, publish religious literature and maintain contacts with their counterparts abroad.

The extensive rights enjoyed by believers in the Soviet Union do not mean, however, that they do not have to abide by Soviet laws.

For instance, it is against the law to use religious assemblies for making political statements aimed against the interests of the state, to instigate believers to evade the performance of civic duties, to induce them to refuse to take part in

social and political life, and to perform wild fanatic rites injurious to believers' health. [1]

Soviet legislation has never provided for punishment for religious convictions. All, believers and non-believers alike, are equal before Soviet justice, and if a believer commits a crime he is called to account not because he believes in God, but for his criminal activity.

The opponents of socialism falsify facts to misrepresent Soviet democracy. They ignore the real rights and freedoms of the hundreds of millions of Soviet people and harp, instead, on the question of freedom of persons who engage in anti-socialist, subversive, anti-Soviet activity. They raise a hue and cry over there being no freedom to indulge in anti-Soviet propaganda and activity in the USSR. Clearly, no one should expect such "freedoms" from the Soviet people. Freedom of the individual is a sacred right of law-abiding citizens, conscientious working people and not of those who would like to be free to work against the people.

Imperialist propagandists hold forth on the alleged judicial and extra-judicial persecution of the so-called dissidents in the USSR, including their confinement in psychiatric hospitals.

To begin with, no one in the Soviet Union is forbidden to think differently than the majority, to assess critically any aspect of social life. There

[1] Seeking to retain their influence on believers, some heads of religious sects (Jehova's Witnesses, Pentecostalists) forbid them to participate in social life, visit cultural establishments, listen to the radio, etc., which is a violation of Soviet laws, of the rights of Soviet citizens, and obstruction of the performance of their duties.

is no legal provision for criminal or administrative responsibility for a person's convictions. But when a few individuals who have cut themselves off from socialist society come out actively against the socialist system, embark upon a path of anti-Soviet activity, violate laws and, having no support within the country, apply for support from without, to imperialist propaganda and intelligence agencies, the people demand that such persons be treated as adversaries of socialism engaging in criminal activity against their own country.

And it is for these criminal actions and not for their views, their "dissidence", that they are punished.

As for the talk of placing "dissidents" in psychiatric hospitals, this is also an invention from beginning to end. Soviet medicine guarantees that treatment is prescribed only for persons with psychic disorders. It is not excluded, of course, that "dissidents" can be found among them. Bourgeois propaganda conveniently forgets the instances of persons who had received treatment in psychiatric clinics and had been portrayed as "victims of the Soviet regime" again having to enter similar institutions after going abroad.

Along with the economic, social and political rights of citizens, the Constitution of the USSR proclaims and guarantees personal immunity, inviolability of the home and privacy of correspondence.

To be sure, in combatting crime recourse has to be taken to such measures as arrest or detention, but the principle of personal immunity is only deviated from when a person has com-

mitted or is suspected of having committed a crime, and is applied in exceptional cases. No person can be arrested except with the sanction of the procurator or by a court order.

In the Soviet Union, an unlawful arrest or detention is a criminal offence, and the official guilty of it can be sentenced to deprivation of freedom for a term of up to one year.

Closely connected with the guarantees of personal immunity are the guarantees of inviolability of the home and privacy of correspondence. These personal rights, too, are strictly protected by law. A citizen's home can be entered against his will only in connection with his having committed or being suspected of having committed a crime, and searched only by decision of the organ of inquiry or the investigator, and only with the sanction of the procurator.

Likewise, the sanction of the procurator or a court order are necessary for the seizure and impounding of correspondence at postal and telegraphic institutions, which are conducted in the presence of witnesses and with the drawing up of appropriate documents.

These are the legislative guarantees of the constitutional right of every Soviet citizen to personal immunity.

Socialist democracy presupposes unity of rights and duties, of genuine freedom and civic responsibility, harmony of the interests of society, the collective and the individual.

* * *

A socialist state differs fundamentally from a state of the exploitative type in that it not only

constitutes an organ of genuine government by the people, but steers a course for the abolition of state power. "The supreme goal of the Soviet state," the Constitution points out, "is the building of a classless communist society."

With the victory of socialism and the transformation of the state from an instrument of class dictatorship into a nationwide political organization the possibility for its withering away grows more distinct. The category of people who are exclusively engaged in running the state will gradually disappear when democracy is developed to the fullest extent. As government by the people develops the socialist state creates conditions under which the need for it will increasingly diminish and it will gradually wither away, and this will take place, not by somebody's wish or arbitrary decision, but because the creation of an abundance of material goods, the perfection of socialist social relations, the growth of the communist consciousness of the people, their complete social and ideological unity will make the running of the affairs of society by the state unnecessary.

А. Косицын
СОЦИАЛИЗМ И ГОСУДАРСТВО
на английском языке
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